| 1 | CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE LEGAL DIVISION | |
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| 5 | Attorneys for Steve Poizner, | • |
| 6 | Insurance Commissioner | |
| 7 | BEFORE THE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER | |
| 8 | OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA | |
| 9 | SACRAMENTO | |
| 10 | SAC | KAMENIO |
| 11 | To the Motton of | ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST; |
| 12 | In the Matter of: | ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE; NOTICE OF RIGHT TO HEARING; and NOTICE OF |
| 13 14 | | ADDITIONAL FINE (Cal. Ins. Code §§ 12921.8 and 15006) |
| 15 | PARAMOUNT DISASTER RECOVERY, INC., a California | File No: SAC 10701-A; |
| 16 | Corporation; | |
| 17 | STEVE SLEPCEVIC, an individual; | File No: SAC 10704-A; |
| 18 | CHARLIE ROSE, a.k.a. REED LOSTMAN, an individual; and | File No: SAC 10705-A; |
| 19 | MATTHEW TODD, an individual, | File No: SAC 10706-A; |
| 20 | Respondents. | |
| 21 | JURISDICTION AND PARTIES | |
| 22 | 1. The California Department of Insurance (hereafter "Department") brings this | |
| 23 | matter before the Insurance Commissioner of the State of California (hereafter "Insurance | |
| 24 | Commissioner"), pursuant to the provisions of California Insurance Code sections 12921.8 and | |
| 25 | 15006(c). | • |
| 26 | 2. Respondent, PARAMOUNT DISASTER RECOVERY, INC. (hereafter | |
| 27 | "PARAMOUNT"), a California corporation, with its principal offices located at 27520 | |
| 28 | | |

Hawthorne Boulevard, Suite 176, in Palos Verdes, California, that was formerly known as West Coast Paramount Construction, Inc. prior to April of 2004, is not now nor has ever been licensed by the California Insurance Commissioner, to act in any capacity regarding the transaction of insurance, including but not limited to act in the capacity of a Public Insurance Adjuster, pursuant to California Insurance Code section 15006.

- 3. Respondent, STEVE SLEPCEVIC (hereafter "SLEPCEVIC"), is an individual who is not now, nor has ever been, licensed by the California Insurance Commissioner, to act in any capacity regarding the transaction of insurance, including but not limited to act in the capacity of a Public Insurance Adjuster, pursuant to California Insurance Code section 15006, and is the Chief Executive Officer of Respondent PARAMOUNT.
- 4. Respondent, CHARLIE ROSE a.k.a. REED LOSTMAN (hereafter "ROSE"), is an individual who is not now, nor has ever been, licensed by the California Insurance Commissioner, to act in any capacity regarding the transaction of insurance, including but not limited to act in the capacity of a Public Insurance Adjuster, pursuant to California Insurance Code section 15006.
- 5. Respondent, MATTHEW TODD (hereafter "TODD"), is an individual who is not now, nor has ever been, licensed by the California Insurance Commissioner, to act in any capacity regarding the transaction of insurance, including but not limited to act in the capacity of a Public Insurance Adjuster, pursuant to California Insurance Code section 15006.

FINDINGS & AUTHORITY

- 6. California Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(1) authorizes the Insurance Commissioner to issue a Cease and Desist Order to a person who has acted in a capacity for which a license, registration, or certificate of authority from the commissioner was required but not possessed.
- 7. California Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(2) authorizes the Insurance Commissioner to issue a Cease and Desist Order to a person who has aided and abetted a person described in California Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(1).

- 8. California Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(3) authorizes the Insurance Commissioner to impose a monetary penalty, pursuant to an order to show cause, on a person described in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2).
- 9. California Insurance Code section 12921.8(c) authorizes the Insurance Commissioner to issue a Cease and Desist Order without holding a hearing prior to issuance of said Order.
- 10. California Insurance Code section 15006(b) provides that "Any contract for services regulated by [the Public Insurance Adjuster Act] that is entered into by an insured with any person who is in violation of subdivision (a) may be voided at the option of the insured, and the insured shall not be liable for the payment of any past services rendered, or future services to be rendered, by that person under that contract or otherwise.
- 11. California Insurance Code section 15006(c) provides that "Whenever it appears to the commissioner that any person is engaging in acts or practices in violation of subdivision (a) ¹, the commissioner may, without any requirement of notice or hearing, issue and cause to be served upon that person an order requiring that person to cease and desist immediately from engaging further in those acts or practices."
- 12. California Insurance Code section 15006(e) provides that "The powers vested in the commissioner by this section are in addition to any and all other powers and remedies vested in the commissioner by law, and nothing herein shall be construed as requiring the commissioner to employ the powers conferred in this section instead of or as a condition precedent to the exercise of any other power or remedy vested in the commissioner."
- 13. In or around March 2000, the Department was informed that PARAMOUNT offered customers or potential customers Contract/Authorization/Designations that included the following language: "If insured elects not to repair property, but instead receives loss settlement

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[&]quot;No person shall engage in a business regulated by [the Public Insurance Adjuster Act], or act or assume to act as, or represent himself or herself to be, a licensee unless he or she is licensed under this chapter. Any person who violates this subdivision shall, in addition to any other penalties provided by law, be liable to the state for a civil penalty in an amount not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or if the violation is willful, in an amount not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). The penalty shall be assessed and recovered in a civil action brought by the commissioner in a court of competent jurisdiction in the name of the people of the State of California." (Cal. Ins. Code § 15006(a)).

17.

from insurance company, Paramount shall receive 20% of THE AGREED UPON ESTIMATE, without deduction for depreciation or Insured's deductible."

- PARAMOUNT regarding the contract language identified in paragraph number 13 herein,
 PARAMOUNT represented to the Department, in written correspondence dated January 22,
 2003, that at that time the only contract they were using did not include the language contained in
 paragraph number 13 herein, but instead included the following contract language: "Paramount
 will be paid for in full for repairing/replacing Client's damaged property. Paramount will receive
 the full amount of the total agreed upon estimate (i.e. the estimate Paramount and the Insurance
 Company agree upon), without deduction for depreciation or Client's deductible. Paramount
 shall perform all work according to the agreed upon estimate and will perform all work to meet
 current uniform building codes and/or restore property to pre-loss condition."
- 15. From on or about June 24, 2007, until on or about July 10, 2007, a wildfire (hereafter "Angora Fire") located West of South Lake Tahoe, in the County of El Dorado, State of California burned 3,100 acres of land, destroyed 242 residential properties and 67 commercial structures, damaged 35 residential properties, and injured 3 people.

King & Sanchez

- 16. On or about June 24, 2007, Ken King and Rosemary Sanchez (hereafter (King/Sanchez), owned residential real property and personal property located within the boundaries of the Angora Fire, and sustained damage to their real and personal property as a result of the Angora Fire.
- 17. On or about July 4, 2007, PARAMOUNT, by and through its agents, ROSE and TODD, met with Ken King and Rosemary Sanchez to discuss estimating their loss from the Angora Fire, negotiating with their insurance company and repairing the damage to their property, and entered into a Contract/Work Authorization/Designation with Ken King and Rosemary Sanchez, whereby PARAMOUNT agreed to perform the following services on behalf of King/Sanchez: mitigate emergency damages; prepare an Emergency Service Scope and Cost of Repair Invoice; prepare a Property Damage Scope and Cost or Repair Report; provide

documentation and coordinate inspections with Client's Insurance Company; provide all necessary repair work as per approved Property Damage Scope and Cost of Repair Report; and supervise and evaluate the calculation and content and/or inventory losses to be submitted to the Insurance Company.

- PARAMOUNT agreed to accept the following "Fees for Services: A. In the event Client authorizes Paramount to perform necessary emergency service repairs, Client shall be fully responsible for the costs of said repairs. Paramount will directly bill Client's Insurance Company for emergency service repairs, but doing so shall not relieve Client from liability for such charges until paid in full; B. In the event Paramount repairs Client's property, Client shall pay Paramount the total amount set forth in the agreed upon Property Damage Scope and Cost of Repair Report. Provided the Client's Insurance Policy contains code upgrade and pollution coverage, Paramount guarantees that all work will meet or exceed uniform building codes; or C. If Client and/or Paramount elect not to have property repaired by Paramount, Client shall pay Paramount 20% out of the total full amount of the loss settlement negotiated with and agreed to by Client's Insurance Company. Paramount will receive its 20% payment from the initial payment received by the Client from the Insurance Company." (Emphasis added).
- 19. On or about July 5, 2007, Greg Stover, Catastrophe Adjuster for AAA Insurance (the insurer on King/Sanchez's homeowner's policy for said real property) arranged to have COIT Restoration (hereafter "COIT") meet with Ken King and Rosemary Sanchez at their residence to inspect the damage to the King/Sanchez home. Upon their arrival, COIT was met by PARAMOUNT'S agent ROSE, who instructed COIT to leave the premises.
- 20. On or about July 6, 2007, COIT returned to the King/Sanchez residence with Greg Stover. They were met by PARAMOUNT'S agent ROSE, who inquired as to the limits and provisions of the King/Sanchez insurance policy so that PARAMOUNT, by and through its agent, ROSE, could prepare an estimate of the damage to the King/Sanchez property.
- 21. On or about July 11, 2007, Greg Stover provided King/Sanchez with an estimate for the cost to repair the damages to their residence in the amount of \$22,733.81.

- 22. On or about July 11, 2007, PARAMOUNT provided King/Sanchez with their own estimate for the cost to repair the damages to their residence in the amount of \$76,335.40.
- 23. Beginning on or about July 11, 2007, and continuing thereafter, PARAMOUNT, by and through its agents SLEPCEVIC and ROSE have attempted to negotiate a settlement with Greg Stover, on behalf of King/Sanchez, regarding the claim for damages to King/Sanchez's real and personal property.
- 24. On or about July 25, 2007, PARAMOUNT hand delivered a Notice to Carrier to Greg Stover on behalf of King/Sanchez that instructs and authorizes AAA to:
 - a. Directly communicate with regard to this loss/claim and cooperate with Paramount, its staff and team of experts and supply all pertinent documents in connection with the loss/claim above to Paramount with specific regard to the scope of work, cost to repair, replace or restore: (sic) and construction/restoration timeline as said (sic) forth in the Scope of Damage and Cost of Repair Report and other documents related to this off/claim (sic);
 - b. Insert/add/include Paramount as an additional payee on each draft issued toward payment of the claim referenced above and promptly disburse payment directly to Paramount for all invoices submitted;
 - c. The foregoing instructions are irrevocable and may not be amended, modified, revoked or changed in any way without the express prior written consent of Paramount. Client hereby grants Paramount a lien on the insurance proceeds and the right to receive such proceeds for services provided on the Client's claim identified above and on any and all proceeds of any recovery obtained.

Rossi

- 25. On or about June 24, 2007, Mika Rossi (hereafter "Rossi") owned residential real property and personal property located within the boundaries of the Angora Fire, and sustained damage to their real and personal property as a result of the Angora Fire.
- 26. On or about July 14, 2007, PARAMOUNT, by and through its agent, ROSE, entered into a Contract/Work Authorization/Designation with Rossi, whereby PARAMOUNT agreed to perform the following services on behalf of Rossi: mitigate emergency damages; prepare an Emergency Service Scope and Cost of Repair Invoice; prepare a Property Damage Scope and Cost or Repair Report; provide documentation and coordinate inspections with Client's Insurance Company; provide all necessary repair work as per approved Property Damage

Scope and Cost of Repair Report; and supervise and evaluate the calculation and content and/or inventory losses to be submitted to the Insurance Company.

- PARAMOUNT agreed to accept the following "Fees for Services: A. In the event Client authorizes Paramount to perform necessary emergency service repairs, Client shall be fully responsible for the costs of said repairs. Paramount will directly bill Client's Insurance Company for emergency service repairs, but doing so shall not relieve Client from liability for such charges until paid in full; B. In the event Paramount repairs Client's property, Client shall pay Paramount the total amount set forth in the agreed upon Property Damage Scope and Cost of Repair Report. Provided the Client's Insurance Policy contains code upgrade and pollution coverage, Paramount guarantees that all work will meet or exceed uniform building codes; or C. If Client and/or Paramount elect not to have property repaired by Paramount, Client shall pay Paramount 20% out of the total full amount of the loss settlement negotiated with and agreed to by Client's Insurance Company. Paramount will receive its 20% payment from the initial payment received by the Client from the Insurance Company." (Emphasis added).
- 28. On or about July 25, 2007, PARAMOUNT hand delivered a Notice to Carrier to Greg Stover on behalf of Rossi that instructs and authorizes AAA to:
 - a. Directly communicate with regard to this loss/claim and cooperate with Paramount, its staff and team of experts and supply all pertinent documents in connection with the loss/claim above to Paramount with specific regard to the scope of work, cost to repair, replace or restore: (sic) and construction/restoration timeline as said (sic) forth in the Scope of Damage and Cost of Repair Report and other documents related to this off/claim (sic);
 - b. Insert/add/include Paramount as an additional payee on each draft issued toward payment of the claim referenced above and promptly disburse payment directly to Paramount for all invoices submitted;
 - c. The foregoing instructions are irrevocable and may not be amended, modified, revoked or changed in any way without the express prior written consent of Paramount. Client hereby grants Paramount a lien on the insurance proceeds and the right to receive such proceeds for services provided on the Client's claim identified above and on any and all proceeds of any recovery obtained.

29.

24[.]

PARAMOUNT has acted, assumed to act, and/or represented itself to be a Public Insurance Adjuster, as defined in California Insurance Code section 15007², without holding a license from the California Insurance Commissioner, by acting on behalf of or aiding an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage and advertising, soliciting business, or holding himself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims, in direct violation of California Insurance Code section 15006(a)³.

Based upon the conduct described in paragraph numbers 13-28, Respondent,

- 30. Based upon the conduct described in paragraph numbers 13-28, Respondent, SLEPCEVIC has acted, assumed to act, and/or represented himself to be a Public Insurance Adjuster, as defined in California Insurance Code section 15007, without holding a license from the California Insurance Commissioner, by acting on behalf of or aiding an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage and advertising, soliciting business, or holding himself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims, in direct violation of California Insurance Code section 15006(a).
- 31. Based upon the conduct described in paragraph numbers 13-28, Respondent, ROSE has acted, assumed to act, and/or represented himself to be a Public Insurance Adjuster, as defined in California Insurance Code section 15007, without holding a license from the California Insurance Commissioner, by acting on behalf of or aiding an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage and advertising, soliciting business, or holding himself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims, in direct violation of California Insurance Code section 15006(a).
- 32. Based upon the conduct described in paragraph numbers 13-28, Respondent, TODD has acted, assumed to act, and/or represented himself to be a Public Insurance Adjuster, as defined in California Insurance Code section 15007, without holding a license from the California

² "A public insurance adjuster within the meaning of this chapter is a person who, for compensation, acts on behalf of or aids in any manner, an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage under any policy of insurance covering real or personal property or any person who advertises, solicits business, or hold himself or herself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims and any person who, for compensation, investigates, settles, adjusts, advises, or assists an insured with reference to claims for those losses on behalf of any public insurance adjuster." (Cal. Ins. Code § 15007).

³ See California Insurance Code section 15006(a), supra.

Insurance Commissioner, by acting on behalf of or aiding an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage and advertising, soliciting business, or holding himself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims, in direct violation of California Insurance Code section 15006(a).

33. Based upon the conduct described in paragraph numbers 13-28, Respondent, PARAMOUNT has aided and abetted Respondent SLEPCEVIC, has aided and abetted Respondent ROSE and/or has aided and abetted Respondent TODD in acting or representing himself to be a Public Insurance Adjuster without holding a license from the California Insurance Commissioner, by acting on behalf of or aiding an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage and advertising, soliciting business, or holding himself out to the public as an adjuster of those claims, in direct violation of California Insurance Code sections 15006 and 12921.8(a)(2).

ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST

NOW THEREFORE, Respondents PARAMOUNT DISASTER RECOVERY, INC., STEVE SLEPCEVIC, CHARLIE ROSE, a.k.a. REED LOSTMAN, and MATTHEW TODD are HEREBY ORDERED to immediately CEASE AND DESIST from acting, assuming to act, or representing yourselves to be licensed Public Insurance Adjusters in the State of California, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Receiving compensation for acting on behalf of, or aiding in any manner, an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage under any policy of insurance covering real or personal property in the State of California;
- b. Advertising, soliciting business, or holding yourselves out to the public as an adjuster of real or personal property claims; and,
- c. Receiving compensation for investigating, settling, adjusting, advising or assisting an insured with reference to any claims for losses associated with real or personal property in the State of California on behalf of any public insurance adjuster.

Respondent PARAMOUNT DISASTER RECOVERY, INC. is also HEREBY ORDERED to immediately CEASE AND DESIST from the following:

- a. Aiding and abetting any and all unlicensed individuals, including but not limited to SLEPCEVIC, ROSE and TODD, by paying them compensation for acting on behalf of, or aiding in any manner, an insured in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage under any policy of insurance covering real or personal property in the State of California;
- b. Aiding and abetting any and all unlicensed individuals, including but not limited to SLEPCEVIC, ROSE and TODD, by advertising, soliciting business, or holding them out to the public as an adjuster of real or personal property claims; and,
- c. Aiding and abetting any and all unlicensed individuals, including but not limited to SLEPCEVIC, ROSE and TODD, by paying them compensation for investigating, settling, adjusting, advising or assisting an insured with reference to any claims for losses associated with real or personal property in the State of California on behalf of any public insurance adjuster.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Insurance Commissioner may, pursuant to Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(3), impose a monetary penalty in the amount of five times the amount of money received by the person for acting in the capacity for which a license, registration, or certificate of authority was required but not possessed, or in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) for each day the person acted in the capacity for which the license, registration, or certificate of authority was required but not possessed. In the absence of contrary evidence, it shall be presumed that a person continuously acted in a capacity for which a license, registration, or certificate of authority was required on each day from the date of the earliest such act until the

date those acts were discontinued.

NOW THEREFORE, Respondents PARAMOUNT DISASTER RECOVERY, INC., STEVE SLEPCEVIC, CHARLIE ROSE, a.k.a. REED LOSTMAN, and MATTHEW TODD are HEREBY ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE why the Insurance Commissioner should not impose, upon each or all of you, a monetary penalty, pursuant to California Insurance Code section 12921.8(a)(3), which is the greater of the following: five times the amount of money received by PARAMOUNT, SLEPCEVIC, ROSE, and/or TODD while acting, assuming to act, or representing yourselves to be licensed Public Adjusters in the State of California, or five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) for each day PARAMOUNT, SLEPCEVIC, ROSE and/or TODD have acted, assumed to act, or represented themselves to be licensed Public Insurance Adjusters in the State of California.

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO HEARING

California Insurance Code section 12921.8(c), a copy of which is attached to this Cease and Desist Order, provides in part, as follows:

"A person to whom a cease and desist order has been issued, may, within <u>seven days</u> after service of the order, request a hearing by filing a request for the hearing with the commissioner."

If you desire a hearing in this matter, your written request for a hearing must be received within seven days after you are served with this Order. The seven days begins to run on the day after the day you are served, and if the seventh day falls on a weekend, the period in which your request must be filed is extended to Monday or the next business day if Monday is a holiday. Your written request for a hearing must be directed to: Rebecca M. Westmore, Senior Staff Counsel, California Department of Insurance, 300 Capitol Mall, 17th Floor, Sacramento, California 95814.

NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL FINE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Insurance Commissioner may, in addition to any and all other powers and remedies identified herein⁴, pursuant to Insurance Code section 15006(d)⁵,

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 $^{^{4}\,}$ See California Insurance Code section 15006(e), supra.

impose a fine of up to one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per day for each day this Order is violated, in an amount up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed by official seal, this 26th day of July 2007.

STEVE POIZNER

Insurance Commissioner

Ву:

David Link

Deputy Commissioner

[&]quot;Any person who fails to comply fully with an order of the commissioner issued under subdivision (c) shall be liable to the state for a civil penalty in an amount not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) per day that the violation or failure to comply continues, but in no event to exceed a maximum amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The commissioner shall collect the amount so payable and may bring an action in a court of competent jurisdiction in the name of the people of the State of California to enforce collection. This penalty is in addition to any other penalties provided by law." (Cal. Ins. Code § 15006(d).

California Insurance Code Section 12921.8 Cease and desist orders.

19[°]

(1) Issue a cease and desist order to a person who has acted in a capacity for which a license, registration, or certificate of authority from the commissioner was required but not possessed.

(a) The commissioner may do the following:

- (2) Issue a cease and desist order to a person who has aided or abetted a person described in paragraph (1).
- (3) Impose a monetary penalty, pursuant to an order to show cause, on a person described in paragraph (1) or (2). The monetary penalty shall be the greater of the following:
- (A) Five times the amount of money received by the person for acting in the capacity for which the license, registration, or certificate of authority was required but not possessed.
- (B) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each day the person acted in the capacity for which the license, registration, or certificate of authority was required but not possessed. In the absence of contrary evidence, it shall be presumed that a person continuously acted in a capacity for which a license, registration, or certificate of authority was required on each day from the date of the earliest such act until the date those acts were discontinued, as proven by the person at a hearing.
- (b) Notwithstanding paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the commissioner shall not impose a monetary penalty under this Section on a person who has held a license or registration within the prior five years pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 1621), Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 1760), Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 1800), or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 1831) of Part 2 of Division 1.
- (c) A person to whom a cease and desist order or order to show cause has been issued, may, within seven days after service of the order, if a hearing has not already been scheduled by the commissioner, request a hearing by filing a request for the hearing with the commissioner. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340), Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 11370), Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 11400), and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code), and the commissioner shall have all the powers granted therein.
- (d) A person who has a hearing pursuant to subdivision (c) shall be entitled to have the proceedings and the order of the commissioner reviewed by means of any remedy provided by the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340), Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 11370), Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 11400), and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).